

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 297894

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:ETRD, EFIN, MTN, CZ

SUBJECT: CZECHOSLOVAK CONSULTATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR WALKER

REF: MTN GENEVA 9696

1. FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH CZECH MISSION, AMBASSADOR SHOULD
BE AWARE OF CLAIMS/GOLD ISSUE, WHICH IS KEY ELEMENT OF
US-CZECHOSLOVAK BILATERAL RELATIONS.

2. SECTION 408 (LONG-GRAVEL AMENDMENT) OF 1974 TRADE
ACT OVERTURNED AN AD REFERENDUM AGREEMENT, INITIALED IN
JULY,1974, WHEREBY CZECHOSLOVAKIA WOULD HAVE SETTLED
PRIVATE US NATIONALIZATION CLAIMS AT ABOUT 42 CE;TS ON
THE DOLLAR. THE US, IN TURN, WOULD HAVE AGREED TO THE
RELEASE TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA OF 18.4 TONS OF NAZI-LOOTED GOLD
EARMARKED FOR CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY THE TRIPARTITE (US, UK,
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FRANCE) COMMISSION. SECTION 408 PROVIDED INTER ALIA THAT

THE CLAIMS AGREEMENT BE RENEGOTIATED AND THAT THE GOLD NOT BE-RETURNED TO-CZECHOSLOVAKIA UNTIL CONGRESS APPROVED A NEW AGREEMENT.

3. THE CZECHOSLOVAKS HAVE MAINTAINED THAT WE RENEGED ON THE AGREEMENT, AND THE GOC IS USING LONG-GRAVEL AS A RATIONALE FOR LIMITING PROGRESS IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE CREATED BY SECTION 408 ARE COMPLICATED BY A LAWSUIT UNDER LITIGATION WHICH SEEKS TO HAVE THE COURTS DETERMINE THAT THE GOC HOLDS TITLE TO THE GOLD AND THAT THE GOLD CAN BE SEIZED, LIQUIDATED, AND THE PROCEEDS DISTRIBUTED TO CLAIMANTS.

4. SHOULD CZECHOSLOVAK MISSION RAISE GOLD/CLAIMS PROBLEM, YOU SHOULD INDICATE THAT YOU ARE AWARE THAT THIS IS IMPORTANT ISSUE BETWEEN US BUT THAT IT IS BEING HANDLED IN WASHINGTON. YOU HOPE THAT ISSUE CAN BE RESOLVED IN INTEREST OF IMPROVED RELATIONS BUT WOULD ALSO HOPE THAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANDING TRADE AND OTHER TIES WILL NOT BE NEGLECTED PENDING RESOLUTION OF CLAIMS ISSUE. ROBINSON

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